

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS14/H04/17 _____ (please insert ref. above)
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within six months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within 12 months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

In search of literary publicness: A study of post-70s Hong Kong writers

文學公共性的追尋：香港七十後作家研究

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Kwok Sze Wing / Assistant Professor	Department of Chinese / The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigator(s)	N/A	N/A
Others	N/A	N/A

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	2018.01.01	N/A	N/A
Project Completion Date	2020.12.31	2021.06.30	2020.09.22
Duration (in month)	36 months	42 months	2020.09.22
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	2021.12.31	2022.06.30	2020.09.22

Part B: The Final Report**5. Project Objectives**

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. To investigate the interaction between post-70s writers, Hong Kong literary scene and Hong Kong society;
2. To analyze the post-70s writers' self-imagination as public man;
3. To probe the role of literature in post-97 Hong Kong society;
4. To illustrate the relevance of literature to the formation of post-97 Hong Kong public sphere;
5. To evaluate the influence of multimedia and new media on post-97 Hong Kong literature

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: N/A

Reasons for the change: N/A

- 1.
- 2.
3. ..

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

All five objectives have been achieved and summarized as follows.

1. A basic understanding of the interaction between post-70s writers, Hong Kong (HK) literary scene and HK society was achieved. The investigation was achieved through two channels. First, series of background information and primary materials (1997-2016) have been collected. They included: (a) publication and circulation of 10 significant literary magazines/supplements (index with 4674 entries); (b) formation, activities and publication of 7 important local literary societies (66 books, 7 magazines and 120 articles in total); (c) post-70s writers' public engagement/social contact and literary activities in common spaces (about 220 activities); (d) other historical background information, e.g. important political and social event, views or debate related to literature and society (216 articles/books). Given the limited and fragmented nature of the information, supplementary materials were also collected through the second channel, i.e., interviews with 14 post-70s writers (grouping in 7 pairs to explore in-depth dialogues, conducted from 2019 to 2021, transcribed into 300,000 words transcript). The 14 writers provided us with first-hand information and descriptions about the literary scene and general cultural environment of HK in the past decades, as well as their various interaction with literary scene and society. Together with the overall library research, a clearer picture of the post-97 HK literary scene is reconstructed for the first time.

2. The analysis of the post-70s writers' self-imagination as public man was completed. This was achieved mainly through writer-oriented approach and textual analysis, with references to writers' self-reflection in interviews. The PI identified 14 post-70s writers for case studies and interviews. The PI and the research assistant (RA) collected materials related to the 14 writers and prepared a brief bibliography for each writer (about 2500 entries in total). Each bibliography covered the works of the writer (books and pieces published in journal/newspaper supplement/new media), and study/review on the writer (academic papers/theses, books, reviews, interviews, etc.). Related materials from websites and new media were also covered. The PI closely read the texts and analyzed how the writers represented and reflected the outside world and inner self in their textual world. It has led to a comprehensive understanding of the characteristic of the post-70s generation, especially their linkage with reality and HK society.

3. The probe of the role of literature in post-97 HK society was also completed. This was achieved mainly through analyzing the linkages between post-70s writers' writings and their social context. The interviews also collected writers' views on the relationship between literature and society. The PI analyzed the post-70s HK writers' treatment of social issues, e.g., globalization, urbanization, animal rights, psychological illnesses, social movements, etc. Through literary and social analysis, the PI probed into the function of literary representation and lyrical expression to understand the alternative role of literature in society.

4. Likewise, the illustration of the relevance of literature to the formation of post-97 HK public sphere was achieved. Based on the findings of objective (3), this objective on the one hand was achieved through re-visiting Habermas' concept of "public sphere" in the view of Jacques Rancière and Martha C. Nussbaum. On the other hand, it was also illustrated by the retrospection of classical left-wing's theoretical argument on realism, e.g., György Lukács, Roger Garaudy. The visibility of literature in public was also observed, including the debate on "literature and society" in newspapers and new media, on-site literary acts in social movements, etc.

5. The evaluation of the influence of multimedia and new media on post-97 HK literature was basically achieved. This was achieved through evaluating their influence on the formation of writers' translocal imagination, writing style, and new form of expression. However, due to rapid changes of internet environment, some of the old materials, e.g., websites, webpages, blogs, and literary forums in early 2000s could not be accessed anymore. The collection of newspapers from the Mainland was also difficult under COVID-19 situation. Due to the missing of primary text, the influence of multimedia and new media cannot be always examined through textural analysis of

“black-and-white” archives. The evaluation was limited and was mainly relied on the published works and the information collected in the interviews.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	Addressed <i>(please tick)</i>	Percentage Achieved <i>(please estimate)</i>
1. To investigate the interaction between post-70s writers, Hong Kong literary scene and Hong Kong society;	✓	100%
2. To analyze the post-70s writers' self-imagination as public man	✓	100%
3. To probe the role of literature in post-97 Hong Kong society;	✓	100%
4. To illustrate the relevance of literature to the formation of post-97 Hong Kong public sphere	✓	100%
5. To evaluate the influence of multimedia and new media on post-97 Hong Kong literature	✓	80% ^

^ For details, please refer to the last paragraph at 5.3 above.

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

This project is the first comprehensive study of post-70s HK writers, with special focus on literary publicness. Major findings can be summarized into three aspects.

1. The study of post-70s writers: Despite the diversity in terms of works and writing styles, post-70s writers are similar in having global literary citizenship and the identity of a cosmopolite. The development of internet shortens the distance between cities and areas and creates expedite connection of people with no boundaries. The rise of new media and social media also quickens the circulation of news and knowledge. In the cases of post-70s writers, the writing of reality is often diversified into different cultural issues. Through various avant-garde writing experiments of fiction, prose and poem, Lee Wai-yi (李維怡), Hon Lai-chu (韓麗珠), Cheung Yuen-man (張婉雯), Lee Chi-leung (李智良), Lo King-chi (盧勁馳) and Chan Lai-kuen (陳麗娟), recontextualized global cultural issues such as urbanization, urban redevelopment, animal rights, globalization, psychological illnesses, physical disabilities, gender issues in different regional context and situation. They thereby construct the linkage between local HK and the world from a literary-oriented position. In the case of Liu Wai-tong (廖偉棠) and Lee Chi-leung, there is also a refraction of mobility of identity and the imagination of translocality. Moreover, it is observed that the two streams, realism and modernism, those once representing two entirely writing circles in HK literature are merging together. The cross-over of literature and multimedia also suggested that post-70s writers have started a generation of “connection”.

2. The role of literature and its significance in public sphere: According to the analysis of literary works, interviews and literary activities, most post-70s writers do not treat literature as sounding-board for political beliefs or direct statement, or as a tool for intervention of social events. They believe that literature is more about affect and reflective thoughts. The nature of defamiliarization of literature empowers the writers to revisit reality from a distance. In the case of

Lee Wai-yi's ghostly writing, the writer tries to break through the limitations of reality through various mysterious elements. Literature also creates alternative "partage du sensible" for the community (Jacques Rancière). The literary imagination is important to our public life because it would re-define a kind of "poetic justice" (Martha C. Nussbaum). The above arguments can be obviously examined in the case of animal writing by Hon Lai-chu and Cheung Yuen-man. Although the importance of literature is declining in the era of digital image, literature has remained an important component of ideology. It is still thought-provoking and can stimulate discussion and debate in social media and public events.

3. The limitation of the concept of "post-70s writers": In response to the suggestions of the reviewers, the project includes various writer-oriented case studies with textual and social analysis. The case studies altogether provide a comprehensive understanding of the post-70s generation, while each of them retains to reflect the unique characteristics of one's own to go beyond the limitation of generational studies. Moreover, although the project argued that post-70s writers have similar literary ethics and the identity of a cosmopolite, it does not imply that writers other than post-70s do not share these characteristics. Among all 14 interviewees, both Lawrence Pun Kwok Ling (潘國靈) and Chan Chi Tak (陳智德) were born in 1969 but still share similar literary ethics and worldview of most post-70s writers. It is noted that there is much vagueness in generational studies. The term "post-70s writer" can be treated as an easy and clearcut working concept for setting study area of a research project. It is suggested that Giorgio Agamben's "the Contemporary"(同時代人) may be a wider concept that can be applied for the studies of post-97 HK literature. As the formation of post-97 HK is highly complicated, the dialogues and memories of 14 writers are valuable research material which provides witness for the changes in HK. The transcript of the interviews would be edited into a book of 150,000 words for publishing.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (*Maximum half a page*)

The investigation of the background information has enriched the understanding of the literary field of post-97 Hong Kong. The study of "publicness" can be extended to cover the whole post-97 HK literature, including writers of different generations. The interviews have also provided valuable and useful first-hand materials for writer-oriented literary studies. The research can be extended to in-depth studies of individual post-70s writers. Hon Lai-chu, Dorothy Tse, Lee Wai-yi, Lee Chi-leung have been in the spotlight especially in recent years. It can be foreseen that the academia will gradually pay more attention to some of the well-established post-70s Hong Kong writers. For example, Prof. David Der-wei Wang discussed Lee Wai-yi's fiction in an international seminar in April 2022. PI's journal paper on Lee Wai-yi is well received and it has been cited in Taiwan. Further studies on post-97 literature can help to evaluate the significance of post-70s generation in the history of Hong Kong literature. The brief bibliographies, indexes and other primary materials can be made publicly accessible to facilitate further studies.

The research can be extended to some comparative studies about realism / modernism in different periods of Hong Kong literature. Hong Kong writers of realism in 1960s-1970s (e.g., Shu Xiang Cheng (舒巷城), Hei Xi (海辛)), and the modernists who were closely related to 1960s-1970s student movement (e.g., Ko Siu Sun (古兆申), Chong Ling Ling (鍾玲玲), Wan Kin Lau (溫健騮)) can be further explored. After the paper on Lee Wai-yi's writing of realism, the PI has extended the studies of realism in Hong Kong literature to the case of Shu Xiang Cheng's fiction in 1950s. It will be covered in PI's another ongoing FDS research project on representation of soundscape. The research has also been extended to an inter-institutional research project on the modernist in 1960s. To further investigate Ko Siu Sun and Wan Kin Lau, the PI joined a RGC General Research Fund (GRF) project as co-investigator. (Project Title: "Creating Writing Pedagogy during the Cold War: The University of Iowa's International Writing Program and Hong

Kong Poets", no. 12607419, 2019/09-2022/02, PI: Prof. James Shea, HKBU). PI's finding was presented in an online symposium "Transpacific Creative Writing Pedagogy: The University of Iowa and Asian Writers during the Cold War", with the title of "Union Press, literary field and cultural circulation" in Hong Kong Baptist University on 2020/05/21.

6. Layman's Summary

(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

This project is the first comprehensive study of post-70s Hong Kong writers, with special focus on literary publicness. Through the investigation of series of background information (1997-2016) and writers' interviews, a clearer picture of post-97 HK literary scene is reconstructed for the first time. In post-97 Hong Kong, literary magazines edited by post-70s intellectuals were no longer of pure literature, but full of cross-sectorial topics that echoed the society. This project includes various writer-oriented case studies with textual and social analysis, altogether they provide new understanding of the identity, literary ethics, and worldview of post-70s writers by probing into the complicated relationship between literature, media, and society. Despite the diversity in terms of works and writing styles, post-70s writers are similar in having global literary citizenship and the identity of a cosmopolite. Through imagination and introspection, they express their concerns over global cultural issues such as globalization, urbanization, gender, animal rights, psychological illnesses in different regional context. They thereby construct the connection of the local and the world and participate in the public sphere from a literary-oriented position. The emphasis on the importance of new media also illustrates the study of literature in the internet era and informational society.

Part C: Research Output**7. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
2020				Kwok Size Wing	〈能動的現實：李維怡小說的鬼魅書寫〉，《中國現代文學》第38期，頁45-72，2020。(THCI)		Yes (Annex I)	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202000145)
	Accepted by editorial board of the book in March 2020			Kwok Size Wing	〈動物書寫與文學政治——以張婉雯和韓麗珠為例〉，載於朱耀偉、梁淑雯編，《在地因緣：香港文學及文化論文集》，香港：香港城市大學出版社。		Yes (Annex II)	Yes	No (Will be available after publication)
	Accepted by the publisher in March 2022		To be submitted to Hong Kong Arts Development Council for funding review in December 2022	Kwok Size Wing	《香港七十後作家訪談錄》，香港：匯智出版社。Forth-coming in 2023.		Publication Contract (Annex III)	Yes	No (Will be available after publication)

8. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
August 2018 Shanghai	Beyond locality: avant-garde, cosmopolitanism and post-70s Hong Kong writers	The 12th International ACS Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference	2019	No	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201800010)
March 2019 Taipei	Dynamic reality: On Lee Wai-yi's fiction (能動的現實：論李維怡小說)	The Cultural Studies Association (CSA) 2019 Annual Conference	2019	No	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900017)
May 2019 Hong Kong	Bohemian Hong Kong: Hong Kong's point of view and translocal imagination of Liu Wai Tong (波希米亞香港：廖偉棠的香港角度及跨地想像)	Workshop of "Cantonese Connection: Periodical Studies in the Age of Digitalization"		Yes (Annex IV)	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900038)
May 2019 Hong Kong	Animal writing and the politic of literature: the cases of Cheung Yuen Man and Hon Lai Chu (動物書寫與文學政治——以張婉雯和韓麗珠為例)	The Question of Locality: Hong Kong Literature and Culture, An International Conference (在地因緣：香港文學及文化國際學術研討會)		Yes (Annex V)	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900019)
May 2021 Singapore	In Search of Literary Publicness: A Case Study of Post-70s Hong Kong Writers' Treatment of Contemporary Social Movements 文學公共性的追尋——香港70後作家對當代社會運動的書寫	"Hong Kong Uncharted: Cultural Production and the Spirit of Publicness" (Webinar)		Yes (Annex VI)	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202100016)
/	Mobility and Cosmopolitanism: A Post-97 Hong Kong Writer and His Global Cultural Politics	The 23rd biennial conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS 2020) [Accepted but withdrawn due to COVID-19] *		Yes (Annex VII)	Yes	No (Will be available after presentation)

* Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PI was not able to attend any overseas academic conference in 2020. Although the PI organized a panel and the panel proposal was accepted for presentation at the 23rd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS 2020), which was scheduled in late August 2020 at Leipzig University in Germany, the conference has unfortunately been postponed. The abstract and the letter of acceptance are attached for easy reference.

9. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

Based on the findings of this project, the PI explored some works of post-70s Hong Kong writers which are suitable for teaching and learning in tertiary-level courses. The new knowledge has enhanced the PI's teaching of Hong Kong literature and creative writing in the following modules of BA-Chinese programme:

- “CHI3007 Modern and Contemporary Chinese Prose Selected Readings and Writing”;
- “CHI3009 Contemporary Chinese Literature and Society”;
- “CHI4006 Appreciation and Writing of Modern Chinese Fiction”;
- “CHI5000 Thesis”

The works of Liu Wai-tong, Hon Lai-chu, Dorothy Tse and Tang Siu Wa have been selected for students' reading and application. Some significant topics covered in this research project such as “the role of literature in society” and “the relevance of literature to the formation of public sphere” were also discussed with theoretical references. The teaching materials and discussion have inspired the students very much. The knowledge transfer can be further observed in 4 students' thesis. They all have extended the reflection about “literature and society / history” to their studies on Hong Kong writers of post-97 periods.

8 undergraduate students of Department of Chinese were invited to transcribe the interviews into editable transcripts for further processing. Students gained some basic research experiences, knowledge of Hong Kong post-97 literature, and enhancement in the use of Chinese language.

Due to limitation of resources, instead of holding a symposium on “literary publicness” in the University, the PI has organized a series of talks for exchanging views on above topic. The activities were held in The Institute for Chinese Language and Culture and/or Department of Chinese, Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. Some target writers of this FDS project were invited to share their works and literary opinions. The online talks provided a public platform for discussion, which hundreds of undergraduate and postgraduate students from different universities could participate in enthusiasm. In these 3.5 years, the on-site/online activities have created interesting, inspiring, and fruitful learning experience for students continuously. The details of talks series of post-70s Hong Kong writers are as below:

1. Ho Lok, Chan Tsz-him (陳子謙), “How to write about Hong Kong” (如何書寫香港), 2018/03/03.
2. Tang Siu-wa, “Solitude and Homelessness, The Private and the Public: Tang Siu-wa On Prose” (孤獨流離，私密公共——鄧小樺談散文), 2019/03/08.
3. Hon Lai-chu, “A Time to Scream, A Time to be Silent: Writing as a Method to Balance Body and Mind” (吶喊有時，沉默有時——以寫作作為平衡身心的方法), 2020/11/5.
4. Ho Lok & Chan Tsz-him, “The Taste of Prose” (散文的滋味), 2020/06/23.
5. Chan Lai-kuen & Lau Wai-sing, “Poetry and Daily Life” (詩與生活), 2020/06/26.
6. Lee Wai-yi, “Intensity and Silence are the same Beast: Writing the Surrealistic Daily” (激烈與寂靜是同一頭獸——書寫超現實的日常), 2021/03/04.
7. Lee Chi-leung, “Impossible Reality, Difficulties and Possibilities of Writing” (不可能的真實，書寫之困頓與可能), 2021/04/01.

10. Student(s) Trained

(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
██████████ ██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
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██████████ ██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████

11. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

The PI's journal paper on Lee Wai-yi is well received and has led to more studies of Hong Kong 70s writers. It has been cited in a conference paper by a post-graduate student in Taiwan. The PT was invited to be the discussant of this paper. The paper, "Feminine Writing and Dynamic Dimension of Hong Kong left-wing—A case study of Lee Wai-yi's *Agarwood*" (香港本土左翼的女性書寫與能動向度——以李維怡《沉香》為例), was presented in The Conference "Criticality: Hong Kong Studies and Its Discontents" (臨界：香港研究及其不滿) which was organized by Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (國立陽明交通大學), 2022/03/26.

In 2021, the PI was invited by Hong Kong Arts Development Council to write a review for Lee Chi-leung's new book, "Gaze and Resonance: Reading *Day We Cross* by Lee Chi-leung" (凝視與共感：讀李智良《渡日若渡海》), helping to evaluate the quality of funded book project.

The PI was invited to participate 5 activities for public that provided good impact for knowledge transfer. The talks and seminars introduced the books and recent publications of some post-70s writers whom were covered in this research project. The sharing of PI can help the public to know more about the new generation of local writers and raise public's interest in reading the work of post-70s writers. The details of the 5 activities:

1. The PI served as moderator in the section, "Illness Narratives in Literary Writings" (文學的疾病書寫), of the Symposium: Literature and Life (研討會：「文學與人生」) in the 12th Hong Kong Literature Festival(第十二屆香港文學節). The symposium was organized by Hong Kong Public Libraries and was held on 2018/07/07. Hon Lai Chu is one of the presenters. There were about 80 audiences.
2. The PI served as one of speakers in the online seminar "Writing in a Difficult Era: On *The Ghost in the Umbrella* and *Owlsh*" (在艱難的時代創作：談《無遮鬼》與《鷹頭貓與音樂箱女孩》) on 2021/03/13. This is the 11th Literature and Cultural Salon (文學文化沙龍) co-organized by the Research Centre for Chinese Literature & Literary Culture of The Education University of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong Literature Research Centre of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The PI discussed Dorothy Tse's two new books with the author and shared her observation on Tse's writing.

3. The PI severed as one of speakers in the activity “Book Launch: Hon Lai Chu’s *Going Home* (回家)” on 2018/08/15. *Going Home* is the first book of Hon’s prose. The PI discussed the new book with the author and shared her observation on Hon’s writing.
4. The PI severed as one of speakers in the online talk “Genres in the Era and the Difficulties of Writing” (時代的文體與書寫困境) on 2020/12/08. The public talk was organized by The 12th Kowloon City Bookfair (第十二屆九龍城書節) and The House of Hong Kong Literature. The PI discussed Lee Chi-leung’s new book *Day We Cross* (渡日若渡海) with the author and shared her observation on Lee’s writing in this decade.
5. The PI severed as one of speakers in the activity “Reading Club at Halloween: Ghost Zone in Human’s World” (萬聖節讀書會：人間鬼域), organized by Halfcup Squat (半杯寮) on 2021/10/31. The PI shared her finding in the research on Lee Wai-yi’s ghostly writing.

12. Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	1	5	2		Type	No.
					Book review	1#

The book review of Lee Chi-leung ‘s new book *Day We Cross*, is attached for easy reference (Annex XII).

13. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
N/A	N/A